

For Your Calendar

ASAP Fall Business Meeting,
Saturday, October 1, 2005. Airport
Marriott, Dallas, TX

Joint Annual Meeting: AACAP's
52nd Annual Meeting and the
Canadian Academy of Child and
Adolescent Psychiatry's 25th Annual
Meeting, Sheraton Centre Toronto,
October 18-25, 2005

ASAP Annual Meeting, March 16-
19, 2006, Eden Roc Hotel, Miami
Beach, FL

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psychiatric organizations remain good. Sid Weissman, Lois Flaherty, Dick Ratner and others are active in APA. Pedro Ruiz, APA President-elect presented an excellent talk in Houston at our annual meeting. He addressed the difficult topic of treatment of pregnant adolescents. Dick Sarles, President of AACAP and former President of ASAP spoke in Houston on adolescent bullying.

ASAP is strong and wonderful. I encourage you all to participate. Please let me know if any of you would like to be more active joining councils, starting committees or presenting at our meetings. The fall council and committee meetings have been scheduled for Saturday October 1, 2005 in Dallas. --Stephen B. Billick.

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them up for what they were - cruel punishment for impulsive, physically and emotionally damaged kids. South Dakota voided the adolescent death penalty after I spoke to their legislature on adolescent brain development. The Missouri Supreme Court took notice of this and stopped the execution of Christopher Simmons more than a year ago. We owe those judges our gratitude for exercising wisdom and courage in the face of violent threats by death penalty advocates. Although there are threats against the judiciary by certain small disaffected segments of the U.S. population, this kind of behavior materially aided our cause.

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against the adolescent death penalty. We were successful in 1988 in overturning executions for people under the age of 16 and our brief was specifically cited then in the majority opinion. Since then, ASAP

has been the prime mover of this policy in the medical establishment. I presented the policy to the APA at the Council on Psychiatry and the Law in 1999, advocating for offenders who were 16 and 17-years old when they committed their crimes. With the help of two past APA Presidents (Dan Borenstein and ASAP member Richard Harding), the APA adopted our policy. Early in 2004, ASAP initiated the production of an amicus brief in *Simmons vs. Missouri* which the AMA and APA signed along with AAPL, NMHA, AACAP, the Children's Defense Fund and N.A.S.W. This brief was one of several presented to the Supreme Court and led to our prevailing in this decades-long battle.

ASAP is a relatively small but effective advocacy organization on behalf of the mental health of teens and young adults. We are the only organization in this special area and can be justly proud of this major accomplishment. The Juvenile Justice Project of the American Bar Association, led by Miami-Dade Attorney Stephen Harper, has credited ASAP as "the prime mover" in this matter and Harper has publicly stated that "it could not have been done without ASAP". I toast this organization for its unflinching support and continuing presence in this venture. Never underestimate the impact of a small group of committed individuals in changing national policy.

Mark A. Wellek MD.

**One of the penalties
for refusing to
participate in
politics is that you
end up being
governed by your
inferiors.**

- Plato